

Executive Summary

The *CMK Alliance Plan 2026 (CMKAP)* is a pioneering business neighbourhood development plan prepared by an alliance of Central Milton Keynes Town Council and local business leaders, working in partnership with Milton Keynes Council. The Alliance's plan for CMK (Central Milton Keynes) builds on the success of the last forty years and plans the continuing growth of the city centre over the next fifteen.

The Plan celebrates CMK's distinct design and heritage – its renowned grid of roads, wide pedestrian underpasses and porte cocheres (covered walkways), its generous and convenient car parking, its remarkable landscaping and stunning Campbell Park, all of which contribute to the commercial attractiveness and quality of life in our city centre. Just as important is the promotion of CMK's emerging role as the centre of a prosperous and growing region, through greater and more diverse development that contributes to the economic, social and environmental well-being of Milton Keynes.

There are almost 50 hectares (120 acres) of land yet to be fully developed in CMK, where the Plan proposes to:

- » Expand and diversify the retail offer of CMK;
- » Build many more offices to create new jobs;
- » Reserve key sites for major opportunities, such as the proposed expansion of the University;
- » Complete almost 5,000 new dwellings; and
- » Enrich our social, sporting and cultural life with new facilities.

To achieve growth within the existing grid layout and development plots, the Plan supports building at higher densities than those assumed when CMK was originally planned. With buildings up to generally eight stories high, the planned growth can be accommodated without changing the spacious tree-lined street scene.

The *CMKAP* provides investors, developers and landowners considerable flexibility in how they develop their plots, but asks them to take greater responsibility in helping to build a successful city centre – improving pedestrian routes, bringing more animation through greater mixed use and active frontages, creating a diverse street life and a safe night life. This will drive growth in both the daytime and night-time economy.

As well as offering more space to large stores in the Primary Shopping Area, the Plan encourages the provision of small and independent specialist shops, and a new covered market hall to complement and enhance the outdoor market. The Alliance's aspiration is to transform Midsummer Boulevard between Secklow Gate and Midsummer Place into the 'heart' of the city: an exciting public space – a destination in its own right – with animated public art and programmed events, a place where Milton Keynes meets, celebrates and demonstrates.

Land is reserved on two prime sites for major opportunities – institutions and headquarters of a scale and reputation to raise the profile of Milton Keynes nationally and internationally. The Plan supports the aspiration to establish a major university for Milton Keynes. A range of cultural, sporting and community facilities are shown across the city centre with provision for the voluntary sector.

It is important that the centre remain a desirable place to live, particularly for younger individuals and couples working in the centre and for older 'empty-nesters.' Ease of access to what the city centre has to offer draws not only visitors but also new residents to CMK, whose presence contributes to the liveliness of the centre. The Plan encourages the development of a wide selection of dwellings with different tenures and at a range of lower and higher urban densities. New housing will be designed to encourage the creation of strong communities, sharing responsibility for their surroundings. To support residents as well as those working in CMK, the Plan identifies sites for the provision of new sports, community and medical facilities.

Finally, the Alliance recognises the critical role that ease of access and convenient parking has played in the success of Milton Keynes from its beginning. Across the UK today, many town centres are declining and high streets are fading as problems with parking and congestion, combined with inadequate public transport, have driven shoppers and businesses to out-of-town shopping centres and business parks. The challenge is that CMK was designed as the centre for a city of 250,000 and Milton Keynes is now approaching this population and is projected to reach 300,000 by the end of the plan period. There is a long-term need to make public transport, cycling and walking the preferred mode of choice for more people coming to and enjoying CMK, and the Plan promotes these modes of transport. At the same time, good provision for cars remains a competitive advantage for CMK, helping its economic development which is of regional importance and in the national interest.

At the heart of a city well placed to drive the national economic recovery, what happens in CMK is of national significance. The *CMK Alliance Plan 2026* prepares CMK to fulfil its role through a balanced approach, promoting growth and development whilst retaining its competitive advantage as a distinctive place with a high quality of life.

The Alliance looks forward to seeing local people, businesses and Milton Keynes Council rising to the challenge of transforming CMK into the centre of a regional city, a place of which we will all continue to be proud.